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Multi-stakeholder dialogue

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Discussion paper contributed by major groups: women**

Summary

Papers presented to the United Nations Forum on Forests at its third and fourth sessions and in expert meetings have documented the very significant role that women play in sustainable forest management and have provided in-depth analyses of obstacles and constraints to their effective involvement in the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and Intergovernmental Forum on Forests. Reports of conferences on gender, forestry and the environment, as well as reports from Governments, civil society organizations and individuals, show that although the involvement of women in forestry is far from adequate, an increasing degree of attention is being paid at the global level to linkages between gender equality, sustainable development and poverty alleviation. The present paper proposes ways in which the Forum and its partners can significantly promote women's engagement and participation in sustainable forest management through the establishment of a structure that can assist Governments and civil society groups to develop their own capacities to address gender inequality, poverty and forest development.

* E/CN.18/2005/1.
** Presented by the Network for Women in Natural Resource Management.

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I. Introduction

1. The following sources of information were used in preparing this discussion paper:

(a) Report of the second Worldwide Symposium on Gender and Forestry, United Republic of Tanzania, August 2004, a meeting of over 100 women and men from 27 countries, including researchers, academics, environmental and social non-governmental organizations (NGOs), policy makers, progressive farmers, forest-dwellers, private sector representatives, civil society organizations, community-based organizations, media and development partners organized by the Gender and Forestry Research Group of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, the Union's Special Programme for Developing Countries, the Environmental, Human Rights Care and Gender, the University of Dar es Salaam, Sokoine University of Agriculture, the College of African Wildlife Management, Hedmark University College in Evenstad, Norway, and the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). The focus of the symposium was on women's and men's access to forest resources, as a means of improving the livelihoods of the resource-poor and promoting sustainable forest management, both locally and globally. A central issue was ensuring a balance between economic development, social development and natural and forest resource protection as independent, naturally reinforcing and cross-cutting components of sustainable development. Additionally, the symposium attempted to promote new systems that could empower women forest-dwellers to effectively participate in good governance processes in the forestry industry;

(b) Discussion paper contributed by the women's major group to the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue at the third session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, Geneva, May 2003 (E/CN.18/2003/2/Add.5);

(c) Discussion paper contributed by the women's major group to the multi-stakeholder dialogue at the Forum's fourth session in Geneva, May 2004 (E/CN.18/2004/4/Add.5);

(d) Final report of the Global Women's Assembly on Environment: Women as the Voice for the Environment, Nairobi, October 2004;

(e) The sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification: COP6 and the Promotion of Women, World Conservation Union, August 2003 (www.generoyambiente.org/ES/politicas/docs/cop6.pdf);

(f) Information provided by women and men of the listserv of Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management, including the two focal persons of the women's major group, the Director of the Uganda Women Tree Planting Movement and the Director of Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management.

II. Assessment of the implementation of relevant proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/ Intergovernmental Forum on Forests

A. Proposals for action specifically addressing women's issues

2. In its report on its fourth session,[1] the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF):

(a) Stressed the importance of implementing the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) proposals for action on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies. In order to further their effective implementation, IFF called upon countries to ensure equal opportunities for women, in particular indigenous women and women in rural areas, to become beneficiaries of environmentally sound forest-related technologies, know-how and extension services (para. 56 (m));

(b) Urged countries to strengthen outreach programmes targeted at women in the areas of education, training and microcredit that are related to community development programmes and the household use of wood, wood lots for fuel wood and energy-efficient cooking technology (para. 56 (n));

(c) Urged countries and relevant international organizations to use data and information that are disaggregated by gender in sectoral surveys and studies used in the development of technologies for sustainable forest management policies and projects (para. 56 (o));

(d) Invited countries to use national forest programmes, as appropriate, or other relevant programmes to involve indigenous and local communities and women in the formulation and implementation of measures that aim to protect their rights and privileges in relation to forest lands, traditional forest-related knowledge and forest biological resources (as defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity) (para. 66);

B. Implementation of proposals for action

3. Data on the implementation of these proposals for action and the extent to which countries, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, civil society organizations and other actors have made progress in implementing these four proposals is not available for most countries. However, many countries[2] submitted reports to the Forum at its fourth and fifth sessions addressing the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to the thematic issue of social and cultural aspects of forests on strengthening the role of women in sustainable forest management, including through capacity-building and greater participation in community-based forest management. Progress related to these activities is described below.

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[1] See E/CN.17/2000/14.

[2] Cambodia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Guatemala, Indonesia, Japan, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Malawi, Mauritius, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, South Africa, the Sudan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

C. Successes

4. In South Africa, the collection of firewood in woodlands, indigenous forests and wood lots is still an activity undertaken mostly by women. Wood lots were established as part of a solution to minimize the impact on indigenous forests and woodlands, and trusts were formed as legal entities within community structures. These entities were formed through democratic processes and gender issues were taken into account to ensure the sufficient representation of women. The main constraint was the fact that traditional structures did not allow women to participate in decision-making. In order to address this issue, capacity-building interventions were undertaken to change this mindset and allow women to participate in decision-making. The establishment of participatory forest management (PFM) forums and committees also contributed to the empowerment of women in rural communities. Many protected areas that previously did not allow the use of their resources have revised these policies to enable neighbouring communities, especially women, to harvest resources such as thatching grass, reeds and medicinal plants.

5. Indonesia stated that capacity development and institution-building were required to ensure the promotion of fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of forest genetic resources as well as to enhance women's role in implementing sustainable forest management.

6. In recognition of the rights and welfare of women in forest development in the Philippines, a programme to award the most gender-sensitive female project implementer was organized to further encourage and strengthen women to assert their significant role in attaining sustainable forest management. Lingkod Tao Kalikasan, an non-governmental organization headed and managed by many women members, promotes educational programmes on afforestation to reverse forest destruction.

7. In Cambodia, the participation of women in forest management is being encouraged in order to promote community forestry. Women's capacity in building and raising awareness is also being promoted in the process of community forestry development and rural development projects with the assistance of international donors and NGOs.

8. In Brazil, the Acão Democrática Feminina Gaúcha, a women's development organization, opposes indiscriminate and illegal logging activities in the Amazon rainforest.

9. The well-known Green Belt Movement of Kenya was initiated in 1977 by the National Council of Women and led by the Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai. Similarly, the Green Earth Organization of Ghana and the Uganda Women's Tree Planting Movement led women in afforestation efforts to provide fuelwood and efficient stoves, encouraging women to manage nurseries. Similar initiatives have taken place in Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon.

10. Gender equality is an important cross-cutting aspect of Denmark's development assistance. Danish support to Nepal's community forestry programme, for instance, has strengthened the participation of women in the forestry management committees. This support is combined with training in literacy to enhance women's capacity in decision-making processes. Several forest user groups are set up exclusively for and with women. In programmes in Bhutan and the United

Republic of Tanzania, similar efforts have led to an increase in women's participation in community-based forestry management.

11. Guatemala has promoted gender equality and participation as well as the strengthening of women's role in sustainable forestry, including in capacity-building. An example of this is the Association of Eulalensis Women for Pixan-Komop Development

12. In Lesotho, women undertake a substantial proportion of agricultural and forestry activities and are extensively involved in the informal sector. However, this importance is not matched by a degree of access or control over land, as women have user rights only through their husbands. Although many women have found strategies to cope with this, such as sharecropping and illegal leasing, it remains a major problem.

13. Women of the Sudan have participated in a number of forestry projects, especially those concerned with combating desertification and community forests. They are also involved in seedling raising and silvicultural operations such as first thinning in some of the Forests National Corporation forest reserves.

14. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the participation of women in the political, economic and social contexts has increased significantly over the past few years, especially in relation to sustainable forest management. The Women's Development Bank and the Sovereign People's Bank have offered loans for development activities that include the production and sale of wood and non-wood forest products. One project that guarantees women's active participation is the Economic Development of Poor Rural Communities Project, which focuses on the equal participation of men and women in areas of rural poverty.

15. In Japan, the number of women who are forest managers and the number of women-only groups are increasing nationwide, and women are becoming increasingly motivated to engage in forest-related work. In revitalizing forests and forestry as well as mountain villages and regional communities in general, an environment geared towards learning and improving employment and entrepreneurial opportunities is needed in order for women to actively realize their own potential. For this reason, policy measures are being taken in Japan to facilitate the participation of women through women's forestry groups and to develop their networks. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is consulting with women active in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industries, and is carrying out lively exchanges of opinions in order to promote efforts to realize a gender-equal society.

16. In Norway, the Ministry of Agriculture has recognized the importance of increasing the female quota and influence within the forest sector as a whole, among forest owners, in organizations and in boards and councils. Women in Forestry is working to strengthen the influence and position of women in the forest sector and receives public funding in support of its work. The Ministry of Agriculture is supporting a research project to explore differences in the way men and women behave as active managers of their forest properties. The Forest Extension Institute has tried to increase the percentage of women taking part in the training offered by the Institution, which now totals 10 per cent. In recent years, there has been a deliberate attempt to increase the percentage of women in general in the public sector, especially in the management teams. A variety of instruments have been

employed to that end, and the Ministry of Agriculture has adopted a specific strategy document to govern these efforts. That strategy is guiding all new engagements. Also, according to the Norwegian Gender Equality Act, at least 40 per cent of each sex is to be represented on public boards, councils and working groups.

17. The Ministry of Gender Equality of the Republic of Korea has tried to strengthen women's role and encourage their participation in social activities through training and education for women, extended maternity leave, an increased number of childcare institutions and increasing the rate of female employment. In 1993, only 6 out of 87 new employees of the Korean Forest Service (7 per cent) were women. By 2003, that figure had increased to 32 per cent (16 out of 50 new employees). The Republic of Korea expects that many more women will participate in the development of forest policy, research and management in the future.

18. In the Russian Federation, women occupying posts as specialists and heads of the State Forest Service represent 23 per cent of the Service's staff. Women comprise 35 per cent of the specialists and heads of the regional departments and committees on natural resources. Women's role at the level of forest management units is especially important. While only 22 per cent of the heads of these units are women, women traditionally occupy the key posts of bookkeepers (97 per cent are women), economists (88 per cent are women), afforestation engineers (71 per cent are women) and forest use engineers (69 per cent are women). Women comprise 49 per cent of heads and specialists of nurseries, 40 per cent of assistants to forest wardens, 29 per cent of forest protection engineers, and 25 per cent of forest masters. Women are underrepresented in certain areas, representing only 5 per cent of forest management unit directors, 14 per cent of deputy directors of forest management units, 15 per cent of chief forest wardens, and 13 per cent of forest wardens. NGOs also develop projects related to women in sustainable forest management. The resulting data testify to the extremely important role of women in sustainable forest management in the Russian Federation.

19. The role of women in the forestry sector in Canada has changed dramatically over the past 15 years. There has been a shift on the part of women from the more traditional subordinate and supporting roles to management and decision-making positions, according to a 2001 study that examined women's contribution in defining the Canadian forestry agenda. National statistics show that women continue to be underrepresented in the field of forestry as university students, in academia, in operations and in all facets of the forest sector. Women represent only 16 per cent of those employed in the forest sector, well below the overall average of 45 per cent in all occupations. The study highlights formal and continuing education as well as the influence of a mentor as being important to the advancement of women in the forest sector. The study also found that over 75 per cent of those surveyed encountered barriers to success along the way relating to gender, age, pay inequity and balancing the demands of career and family. Some 39 per cent of respondents also felt they were not being treated equitably on the pay scale. Most agreed that having men and women working together and being equally valued for their contributions is the best approach to tackling some of the remaining challenges. From an international development perspective, Canada recognizes that women head a growing number of households in many countries. In addition to their roles as farmers and homemakers, women make up a growing proportion of the paid labour force serving the forest industry and informal sector enterprises, such as crafts, extracting fibre and making charcoal. To realize their full potential as agents of development, women need some

control over the natural resources they use. In order to give gender issues the necessary attention, Canada's international development projects feature a comprehensive gender strategy that is monitored and evaluated.

20. Forestry in Switzerland is still one of the most strongly male-dominated fields: 98.3 per cent of the entire forestry workforce is male. A study was commissioned in 2001 to look into gender equality and career opportunities for women in forestry. The results of this study were published, and a working group is currently being set up to discuss the implementation of the measures proposed in the study. Switzerland has recognized that enhancing the equality of women and men is a means of reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development. For this reason, a particular emphasis is placed on gender equality in Swiss development cooperation: the agencies responsible for development cooperation, have formulated gender policy guidelines that specify that every intervention should be based on a stock-taking that takes into consideration gender aspects. For this reason, staff are trained to improve their competences in gender-related questions. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation has a special gender unit that has developed a toolkit enabling staff to implement the strategy in all their activities. A particular focus is placed on the better integration of women in decision-making processes and on their participation in the benefits arising from the sustainable use of natural resources.

21. The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland commissioned a senior human resources adviser to examine the recruitment, selection and advancement of professional women foresters. The findings indicated that young women were not being attracted to higher education in forestry, largely because of competition from alternative career opportunities. Women foresters in mid-career reported past examples of gender-based discrimination, although younger women did not report any direct discrimination. The Government is currently implementing a number of the recommendations from the study and the Forestry Commission has since approached the providers of higher education in forestry to discuss a strategy for promoting forestry among young women. Similarly, a coordinated approach to recruitment for both men and women has been initiated between the Forestry Commission, and other employers, trade bodies and universities. In addition, the United Kingdom plans to support the forthcoming Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/Economic Commission for Europe/International Labour Organization team of specialists on gender in forestry and has nominated a consultant to participate in the team.

22. The past decade has witnessed a continued expansion of the role of women in sustainable forest management in the United States of America, from the community level to the national level and beyond. Women now hold recognized leadership positions in community-based forestry organizations and networks of these organizations across the country. Women are in leadership positions in forest management organizations in federal and state agencies and within the forest industry. Women are in leadership positions at the national policy level in forestry and are among the leading participants for the United States in international policy and planning related to sustainable forest management. Finally, women constitute a significant proportion of students in university programmes in forestry, natural resource conservation and environmental sciences, including advanced degree programmes. As in many other areas of the world, women have traditionally not been as well-represented as men in forestry, natural resource management, and related activities. In recent decades, the social obstacles confronting women who

desired to work in the male-dominated forest profession have diminished. Women are now encouraged to work even in physically-demanding forestry activities such as silviculture or fire suppression, and the percentage of women in these jobs has grown steadily in government agencies, the forest industry and NGOs. Women are also members or heads of households that own 117 million hectares of forest land and thus exert significant influence on the management of a significant portion of private forests in the United States. Government agency hiring of women in the United States is guided by national and state law as well as policies that are not unique to the forestry sector. For example, all government agencies and private industries are subject to equal employment opportunity laws that forbid discrimination on the basis of gender. Federal agencies are also subject to affirmative action rules, which may require actively increasing the percentage of women and minorities in certain departments or positions. The Forest Service has also initiated outreach programmes to attract more women to forestry, and especially employment with the Forest Service, through forestry education and cooperative employment programmes. Women play a particularly important role in sustainable forest management through the NGOs that influence government agencies and forest industry decision-making. National and state-level environmental and conservation organizations such as the Nature Conservancy, the National Wildlife Federation, the World Wildlife Fund and the Natural Resources Council of America have women in top-level positions, including that of chief executive. Women are also leading many of the community-based organizations striving to balance ecological, economic and social priorities in forestry at the local level and coordinating the activities of these organizations through organizations such as the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress, the National Network of Forest Practitioners and the Forest Stewards Guild. In addition, a few states have formed non-profit "women in timber" organizations to promote the involvement of women in forestry activities and to provide educational resources to women forestland and business owners.

23. Several initiatives are being taken to give opportunities to women in Mauritius to play a more active role in the forestry sector. The forestry service has recently modified its scheme of service to recruit female forest staff also.

24. Malawi's National Forestry Policy and the National Forestry Programme have provided the basic guidance and foundation on the role of women in forest management at the implementation levels. Similarly, the Department of Forestry has made deliberate attempts to position women in decision-making positions in district and regional forestry offices as well as forestry training institutions and department headquarters. Trainee recruitment procedures have also deliberately been opened up to allow for women trainees as a basis for future advancement of women in forest management. More substantively, advances have also been made to streamline gender aspects in all forestry programmes in the Department of Forestry. The issue of women in forest management is, however, a continuous one that must be addressed by the country's education system.

25. Equal opportunities for women and men are an important item in mainstream policies and laws of the Netherlands, and are therefore also valid in Dutch forest administration and legislation. Gender equity is not mentioned specifically in the Dutch National Policy Plan for Nature, Forests and Landscape in the twenty-first Century, although the paper emphasizes the importance of stakeholder participation in forest and nature management. In development cooperation programmes with

other countries, however, the attention paid to the issue of women/gender and development is one of the main criteria for selection and evaluation.

26. Currently, the forestry policy of Slovakia does not specify any particular measures to promote the role of women in sustainable forest management. This is the aim, however, of a voluntary organization of women foresters, the Association of Women Foresters, a civil association created in 2000.

27. In addition to the country reports, some international organizations also have provided evidence of their progress on addressing these goals. Gender issues and forest and woodland history have been the dominating themes of the work of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) on the social and cultural aspects of forests in the past year. The IUFRO research group on Gender and forestry has continued to be very active in developing and disseminating information on how the management and use of forest resources affect and are affected by gender.

D. Obstacles and constraints

1. Degraded environments and poverty

28. The continuing degradation and pollution of the environment have far-reaching effects on the livelihoods of communities, particularly of indigenous women and women living in poverty. Gender inequality, environmental deterioration, poor health and poverty are mutually reinforcing. Forest protection and conservation measures often add to the hardships of poor women by denying them access to the forest products they need for, inter alia, energy, food, medicine and livestock feed while providing no alternatives for them to meet their families' basic needs, thus perpetuating the poverty cycle.

2. Lack of awareness

29. There is a general lack of awareness among both women and men about how gender issues affect environmental issues. While many policy recommendations link gender to the environment, development agencies and government departments have tended to overlook the role of women in forestry and the effects of this on poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability.

3. Decision-making roles

30. Inadequate participation by women in environment and sustainable development decision-making and the marginalization of women from the governance of environmental resources are issues of major concern.

31. The number of women in environmental decision-making institutions, for example, remains unrepresentative and "undemocratic", and women worldwide do not enjoy the same rights as men in the area of land ownership. With increasing poverty, poor women's access to and control over natural resources have shrunk, further exacerbating their poverty and the hardship they endure.

32. Steps should be taken to ensure that women are not only a voice but also engaged decision-makers at all levels. In the face of continued male dominance, even mainstream women's movements have ignored indigenous women's issues and

concerns in some countries. Indigenous women are seeking inclusion in decision-making and policy-making as well as the right to access and control land.

33. Ministers of environment should apply continued political pressure to achieve the inclusion of women in decision-making and leadership roles and the establishment of women's networks, including permanent ones.

4. Policies not implemented

34. Despite the progress made in policies over the past 20 years, implementation and action have been lacking. Rather than generating additional policies, there is a need to focus on implementation and to prioritize the challenges to implementation.

35. Many participants at the Global Women's Assembly on Environment: Women as the Voice for the Environment talked about the need for action, for implementation of, in particular, different levels of agreements worldwide and for further involvement by all stakeholders, including women.

5. Insufficient personnel, mentors and networks

36. As reported by many countries, the number of women in higher decision-making posts within forestry institutions is, to date, very low, with the exception of very few countries, including the United States. There are many social and cultural reasons for this, and some Governments are attempting to counteract these cultural and economic causes through innovative recruitment and hiring procedures. Still, women in these organizations are often marginalized and do not have networks and mentors that could strengthen their capacities and influence.

37. The commitment made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to increase the number of women in resource management has not been actualized. Funding and organizational support is needed to build capacity and to facilitate the entry of women into conventions and government meetings to lobby for the implementation of their commitments.

E. Inadequacy of proposals for action

38. The broad and vague language used to describe the IFF/IPF proposals makes it difficult for rural women, NGOs and even forestry officers to relate them to their programmes. This explains in part the lack of available data on their implementation and reporting. Many women who are engaged in sustainable forest management initiatives are not aware of these mechanisms; relatively few of our constituents are familiar with the terms of IFF and IPF. Goals and language that are easily understood by both government professionals and rural women would make reporting on the implementation less difficult.

39. Another problem is that the goals are not multi- or cross-sectoral, which makes them unrealistic for rural women who are simultaneously the managers of farm and livestock resources, household labour and forests.

40. The Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), with their high level of international consensus, offer possibilities for linking forest issues, gender and poverty in an integrated manner. An example would be to reduce poverty by improving rural women's access to forests. Yet the use of the MDGs in this way

requires an understanding of women's roles and needs in order to be effective in the war on poverty. All Governments are required to report on national progress towards the MDGs, providing a common platform familiar to all development actors involved with rural and urban development.

III. Priority areas for action

41. One of the strategic objectives of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action was to integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development. Similar commitments were made in Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in 1992, and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development of the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in 2002 states that: "We are committed to ensuring that women's empowerment, emancipation and gender equality are integrated in all the activities encompassed within Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals and the Plan of Implementation of the Summit."

42. Gender mainstreaming is not a goal in and of itself: the continuous process of infusing both the institutional culture and the programmatic and analytical efforts of agencies with a gender perspective is meant to result in greater gender equality.

43. At the national level, but also locally, regionally and internationally, efforts have been made by Governments, local authorities, international organizations and NGOs to mainstream gender in environmental policies, activities, plans and programmes. For example, organizations such as IUCN, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Commission on Sustainable Development as well as certain Governments (inter alia, those of Germany and Central American countries) have adopted policies, developed instruments and made institutional arrangements related to gender such as the appointment of gender focal points and advisers.

44. However, experiences in these areas are still limited, not well-documented and only partly successful. A concern is that the intention of mainstreaming gender in environmental policies and institutions — if not well managed — results in gender invisibility and ad hoc policies and action. A 1999 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development assessment of seven agencies working on the environment showed that there was no agency that made clear and explicit links between gender equality and environmental sustainability. In many of the agencies, staff even questioned the importance of reflecting gender equality considerations in environmental policies. It is symptomatic that in the national reports of Millennium Development Goal 7 on ensuring environmental sustainability, no references are made to the gender dimension.

45. In a recent assessment of gender performance in UNEP, several components for the success or failure of gender mainstreaming in environmental policies were identified. Several issues of concern were:

- Possibly hostile or indifferent institutional cultures
- The "ghettoization" of gender
- The fact that gender mainstreaming frames a single and finite target
- Inadequacies in indicators, data and analysis for gender-disaggregated work

46. A participant in the Global Women's Assembly on Environment: Women as the Voice for the Environment stressed the potential of partnerships between civil society and Governments in building capacity, due to the complementary strengths of the two sectors. She said that civil society could help to provide training, tools and up-to-date information. She noted that civil society represented a huge and diverse group of experimenters and innovators working at the grass-roots level, and that Governments could use the projects generated in this manner as models to be replicated.

47. Another participant stressed the need for women of different generations to act as mentors for each other, and said that women must commit themselves to sharing information with each other in a transparent manner.

48. A focus on poverty alleviation and local management, combined with capacity-building initiatives, might provide women with opportunities (and a renewed sense of enthusiasm) to engage with forestry initiatives and institutions.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

49. **The inadequate participation by women in environmental and sustainable development decision-making and the marginalization of women from the governance of environmental resources are issues of major concern.**

50. **The current level of attention to gender issues and women's productive engagement with forest-related institutions and the IFF/IPF proposals for action is grossly inadequate if the goals of sustainable development and poverty alleviation are to be met. Resources must be made available to strengthen capacity-building initiatives for rural women and for forest-related organizations to implement gender mainstreaming. The Forum must itself develop the expertise to guide Governments to undertake this work so as to implement the IFF/IPF proposals for sustainable forest management within the MDGs for poverty alleviation. Clearly, capacity-building is a key to moving forward in fulfilling policy commitments to these goals.**

51. **Women must become equal partners in decision-making as well. The goal of promoting women's active participation and gender equality at every level in forest-related organizations and operations provides a unique and timely opportunity for the forest community to take the lead in achieving the objectives described in Rio de Janeiro over 20 years ago and in Johannesburg in 2002 in order to ensure that women's empowerment, emancipation and gender equality are integrated in all the activities encompassed within Agenda 21, the MDGs and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.**

V. Recommendations for achievable goals and targets

52. **Participants in the symposium held in the United Republic of Tanzania recommended improved implementation of gender-related IPF/IFF proposals for action and identified other critical needs in four main areas: policy and legislation, awareness and capacity-building, sustainable development activities and research. The group consistently stressed the important roles of both men**

and women in overcoming global gender inequities. Success becomes more feasible if:

- Serious and long-term institutional commitment and leadership at the highest political level is in place, including monitoring and evaluation mechanisms
- Capacity-building is another building block for gender-sensitive policies
- Cooperation and strategic alliances with women's organizations and between experts are crucial components
- Women's participation and equality are ensured at every level in the organization and operation of the body

A. Proposals for action by the United Nations Forum on Forests

1. Policies

53. The Forum should:

(a) Cooperate with other United Nations agencies, focusing on the realization of MDG 7 on environmental sustainability, and should ensure that gender analysis and gender-disaggregated data are used in country reporting on achieving poor women's access to forests and forest resources;

(b) Urge governments to implement, at the national level, all relevant international treaties in the fields of human rights, sustainable development and the environment, to halt further depletion of natural resources, ecosystems and biodiversity, to protect those resources and to ensure environmental health;

(c) Urge governments to develop, in collaboration with civil society organizations, especially women's groups and others with expertise in this area, gender-sensitive sustainable development indicators that exceed those contained in the MDGs to ensure environmental sustainability and gender equality.

54. Given the importance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other human rights and social instruments, the important linkages between those instruments and multilateral environmental agreements and economic instruments must be identified and addressed. That analysis, which is urgently needed, should take into account the report of the Secretary-General on civil society (A/59/354) and other relevant past documents on those issues. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women must undertake to analyse, take into account and address the linkage between gender and environmental issues.

55. Indigenous peoples' rights must be recognized at the local, national and global levels. The Forum, with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples, should develop guidelines for the participation of indigenous peoples, particularly indigenous women, in environmental policy development and implementation.

2. **Awareness and capacity-building**

56. **The Forum should:**

(a) **Establish a separate unit, with expertise in forestry and gender and development, to assist countries and other partners to provide technical assistance and training to develop policies, skills and knowledge for gender mainstreaming within their forest-related agencies;**

(b) **Provide technical assistance and training to United Nations treaty bodies, in particular the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, to enable their experts to understand the impact and implications of forest degradation on women's human rights, and this knowledge should be integrated into country reports pursuant to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The provisions of the Convention and its optional protocol should also be applied to Forum policies, programmes and initiatives.**

B. Proposals for action by Governments and civil society

1. **Awareness and capacity-building**

57. **It is recommended that:**

(a) **Formal and non-formal educational curricula be reviewed and revised and guidelines developed at all levels to promote gender equality values and practices, understanding of sustainable development and capacity to act for personal, community and social change;**

(b) **Women's political empowerment, leadership and capacity-building, as well as information dissemination among indigenous women, be guaranteed in order to enable their effective participation in the decision-making process related to the environment and sustainable development at all levels;**

(c) **Mentorship programmes be designed and implemented to facilitate multisectoral approaches to knowledge and skills for sustainable forest management;**

(d) **Forestry and environmental studies curricula be introduced, strengthened and reformed where necessary in order to include gender equality issues.**

58. **In addition, capacity-building for women in this area requires equal access to education, training and technology in developing countries as well as more female and male professionals who are gender-sensitive in developing and developed countries.**

2. **Sustainable development activities**

59. **Pilot projects and case studies are still needed to document the impact of engaging women in sustainable forest management initiatives that address the issue of poverty.**

60. **Resources must be made available to strengthen women's capacity-building initiatives, including education and training and their infrastructure. These programmes are currently handicapped by grossly inadequate resources.**

61. **In order to achieve these goals, changes are needed at the secretariat, country and civil society levels.**

Secretariat

- **To provide substantive support on gender issues, the secretariat should include specialists in gender mainstreaming and create a senior-level gender unit in the secretariat (or a partner organization).**
- **To identify stakeholders and provide substantive information and links to Governments, NGOs and civil society groups engaged with women's and gender issues in sustainable forest management, the secretariat or its partner organization should develop and maintain databases and search engines. This will allow for the assessment of experiences and identification of gaps.**
- **Member States and institutions must be urged to formally recognize the need to have significant levels of women participate in national, regional and international forums related to forestry and forest policies through a pledge to include women and provide a fund for their attendance at important global forest-related events.**
- **A roster of experts, both men and women, with expertise in gender mainstreaming in the forest and related sectors, must be established, and equal representation of women and men as consultants and in all expert groups of the Forum must be pursued.**
- **To provide substantive support to organizations that wish to promote women's participation and gender equality, the secretariat should have access to appropriate tools and guidelines.**
- **To assure that policy directives are implemented, the secretariat's budget should have allocations specifically dealing with gender equality and women's participation.**

Implementation

62. **In order to link IFF/IPF proposals for action to the MDGs, progress in meeting these goals should be monitored and reported, as should the degree to which gender and women's access to resources is being incorporated in the plans. This can be achieved through the following action steps:**

- **Conducting gender analysis to understand the differing needs and roles of men and women is necessary for effective policy making and service delivery. This exposes the disparities that lead to social, economic and political inequality and can reveal key connections, such as the importance of women's participation in decision-making for poverty eradication and target strategies for improving poor women's access to resources. Governments, in consultation with women's organizations, should develop gender-focused targets and indicators that are tailored to the national context.**

- **Gender mainstreaming strategies must be used to integrate the different needs of women and men in policy-making. Women must be enabled to affect governance and decision-making.**
- **Gender-balanced decision-making must be ensured in order to include women's perspectives and concerns in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policy decisions and outcomes.**
- **Capacity-building must be achieved by strengthening the awareness and skills of professional women and men in the forestry sector regarding gender sensitivity and mainstreaming.**
- **Partnerships between Governments and civil society, and with regional and global organizations specializing in gender mainstreaming, must be developed so as to assure the implementation of gender-sensitive IFFs/IPF proposals for action in line with the agreements of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and other international conferences and conventions.**
- **The processes of change within forestry institutions themselves must be supported in order for them to become gender sensitive through the development of work plans, research and projects that identify methods of mainstreaming gender into forestry institutions, in collaboration with women's and gender-focused organizations working at the national and global levels.**
- **Mechanisms must be established to monitor the indicators in the IFF/IPF proposals for action in relation to the promotion of women's participation and gender equity. The differential impacts of specific policies and budget allocations on women and men must be analysed to improve accountability and targeting of public services. This has been found to be especially useful in incorporating gender into sectors not normally associated with women, such as forestry and natural resource management.**
- **Pilot projects and case studies must be conducted to document the impact of engaging women in poverty-addressing sustainable forest management initiatives, within the framework of the MDGs.**
- **Networks must be developed and maintained for communications and information dissemination gained from ground experience and research.**
- **National networks must be developed comprising women professionals in the forestry and related sectors who can mentor, build skills and leadership capabilities, share successful approaches and methods and form a body of a large enough size and strength to build organizations at the international, regional, national and local levels to promote gender equality and environmental sustainability.**
- **A gender advisory committee must be established within the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to review project documents and reports.**